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AUTHOR Bergen, Daniel P.
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ABSTRACT

The Long-Range Planning Committee of the Rhode Island Library Association (RILA) was charged with assessing the needs of all types of libraries and library agencies in the state as well as their client groups, and with making recommendations for future service patterns in the state. The committee's deliberations produced these recommendations: (1) establish a bureau of consultation and research at the University of Rhode Island Graduate Library School; (2) engage a publicist to promote all types of libraries in the state; (3) develop a continuing library education program, with cooperation between RILA and University of Rhode Island extension; (4) introduce a state-wide public library borrower's card; (5) provide a forum for discussing unionization of library employees; (6) establish a comprehensive system for distributing Library of Congress bibliographic data to all libraries; (7) promote the appointment of a school library specialist in the State Department of Education. (IS)

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REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS
OF THE
LONG-RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE
TO THE
PRESIDENT
AND
EXECUTIVE BOARD
OF THE
ASSOCIATION

RHODE ISLAND LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

OCTOBER 1974

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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The Long-Range Planning Committee was established by the Executive Board of the Rhode Island Library Association in the summer of 1972. The Board's charge to the Committee was as follows:

> Through an ongoing assessment of the needs of all types of libraries and library agencies in the state, and their respective client groups, the Long-Range Planning Committee shall report to the Executive Board of the Rhode Island Library Association recommendations on future service patterns within the state.

The recommendations of the Committee suggest that this mandate has been interpreted very broadly so as to include activities which go beyond service patterns and transcend the boundaries of Rhode Island.

The Committee met for the first time on 4 January 1973 at the Warwick Public Library. Shortly thereafter, Miss Elizabeth G. Myer, Director of the Department of State Library Services, generously provided each member of the Committee with a copy of the Department's Five Year Long-Range Program for Library Services. On 14 March 1973, the Chairman of the Committee attended a meeting of the State Advisory Council on Libraries and spoke briefly about the nature of the Committee and some of its tentative plans. Between January, 1973, and September, 1974, the Committee met almost monthly at various locations

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in the state including the Warwick Public Library, a member's apartment on the East side of Providence, the Department of Instructional Technology at Rhode Island College, the Barrington Public Library, the Providence College Library, the University of Rhode Island Library, the Smith Hill branch of the Providence Public Library, the Newport Public Library, and the Chairman's home in Wakefield.

The Committee is currently composed of Paul Bazin of the Providence College Library who is also President of the Rhode Island Library Association; Myra Blank of the Providence Public Library; Roberta Cairns of the Barrington Public Library; Ardis Moorhead of the Westerly Public Library; Dick Olsen of the Rhode Island College Library; Sydney Wright of the Warwick Public Library; Irene Demers of the West Warwick High School Library; Betsy Gates of the University of Rhode Island Library; Ron Heroux of the Technical Library at the Naval Underwater Systems Center in Newport; and Dan Bergen of the Graduate Library School at the University of Rhode Island, Chairman. Serving on the Committee at various times during its 20-month existence have been Don Miller, a trustee of the Barrington Public Library; Roy Frye of the Department of Instructional Technology at Rhode Island College; Regina Bacon, Roberta Reeves, and Carol Ingall, all students in the Graduate Library School at the University of Rhode Island; Paul Crane of the West Warwick Public Library; Barbara Higginbotham of the Rhode Island College Library; Sherrie Friedman of the Roger Williams College Library; and Ray Fournier of the South Kingstown High School Library.

A few words might now be written about how the Committee went about its work. The Committee spent a substantial part of the spring of 1973 searching for an identity, that is to say, attempting to define areas of interest and the means of adequately exploring them. There was considerable discussion at the outset of how the Committee's work might relate to that of the Department of State Library Services, of regional bodies such as the New England Interstate Library District and the New England Library Information Network, and even of the National Commission on Libraries and Information

Science. Some members thought the Committee's work might constitute a portion of Rhode Island's input to the proposed White House Conference on Library and Information Services in 1976.

Discussion within the Committee from April to June of 1973 began to focus, rather unsystematically at first, on the organization and administration of libraries, on education for library and information service, and on the problems posed by the non-print media of communication. The Committee did not meet in July or August, 1973, but when it convened again in September, its procedures became more regular.

At that September meeting, it was decided that there would be monthly reports and recommendations by various members of the Committee on topics directly related to long-range planning. The Committee would consider the recommendations as they were made and, in the summer of 1974, would decide which to include in its final report. Over the course of nearly nine months, that approach was followed rather faithfully. In October of 1973, Dan Bergen reported on cultural and social developments in contemporary Rhode Island; in November, Roberta Cairns and Don Miller took up the implications for the work of the Committee of John Humphry's Library Cooperation, a 1963 view of the past, present, and possible future of library service in Rhode Island; in December, Betsy Gates and Ron Heroux dealt with library education; the January, 1974, meeting included recommendations on school library service by Irene Demers; Sydney Wright and Myra Blank considered public library service and library cooperation in February; in March, Ardis Moorhead treated library management and Ron Heroux reported on tele-communications and audio-visual resources; in April, the Committee met with librarians from the Smith Hill and Fox Point branches of the Providence Public Library in a session on "Improving Library Service to Minority Groups"; and in May, the measurement and evaluation of library performance was covered by Dick Olsen.

On 14 June 1974, the Committee met at the Newport Public Library to select those recommendations which (1) might improve library and information service in Rhode

Island and (2) have some realistic chance of implementation. On 16 September 1974, the Committee met for a final time to refine the selected recommendations.

The Chairman would like to thank those who have served on the Committee, especially those who have persevered from its genesis to the present moment, a period of nearly two years.

The recommendations of the Committee are set down on the pages which follow.

THE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That there be established in the Graduate Library School at the University of Rhode Island a Bureau of Consultation and Research designed to serve the libraries and information services, the librarians and information workers, of Rhode Island and New England.

The proposed Bureau would provide (a) advisory service in such areas as the development of goals, the planning of activities, the administration and management of operations, the qualitative and quantitative assessment of performance, the study of user requirements, the evaluation of equipment, the construction of new facilities, the analysis of staff, and the selection, control, and dissemination of materials; (b) research capacity commensurate with the problems confronting the libraries and information services of the state and region; and (c) the expertise needed to design and test new library and information services and new ways of organizing and governing libraries and information agencies.

There is precedent, in fields as diverse as agriculture, business, and government, for the existence of such a Bureau on the campus of a state university. In those fields, university bureaus seek to combine the pragmatics of consultation and demonstration with the theoretics of research. In library and information service, on the other hand, the practice has been to divorce the pragmatic from the theoretic. Graduate schools of library and information service have been inclined to create research centers (the University of Illinois-Urbana and the University of California at Berkeley come immediately to mind) and to devote less attention to those consultation and demonstration activities which such schools are often uniquely prepared to provide. Illinois is a case in point: the Illinois State Library offers consultation services to the state's libraries and librarians,

but it contracts for research with the Library Research Center in the Graduate School of Library Science at the University of Illinois-Urbana. The proposed Bureau of Consultation and Research would avoid that kind of division by patterning itself along the more integrated lines suggested by agriculture, business, and government. At the same time, the Bureau would not duplicate those promotional, advisory, and developmental activities with which state library agencies and state departments of education are charged by law. Its purpose would be to provide that special competence in consultation, research, and demonstration which may not otherwise be available, from a public institution, to the libraries and information services of Rhode Island and New England. The Bureau's services would be available to the tax-supported libraries and information agencies of the state and region and, under appropriate arrangements, to private institutions as well.

There is precedent as well for the creation of a Bureau with a regional mission. The New England Interstate Library District, in which the six state library agencies and the New England Library Association participate, is intended to promote regional library development and cooperation. Each state in New England is expected to contribute, by legislative or gubernatorial action, to the funding of the District and its governing New England Library Board. Advisory input to the District comes from other regional bodies including the New England Council, the New England Governors' Conference, and the New England Board of Higher Education. The New England Interstate Library District expects to concern itself with all types of libraries. There is also the New England Library Information Network, a manifestation of the New England Board of Higher Education's interest in regional library programs. Academic, public, and special libraries already participate in this regional bibliographic and information network. One of the long-term goals of the New England Library Information Network is the encouragement of "activities which enhance regional library and information

resources and services." A library-related regional agency is the New England Document Conservation Center. The Center, like the New England Interstate Library District and the New England Board of Higher Education, is supported by contributions from the states in the region.

Perhaps the strongest precedent for the creation of a Bureau of Consultation and Research in the Graduate Library School at the University of Rhode Island is the School's nearly region-wide program of instruction. In addition to its offerings in Kingston, the School provides instruction at the University of Connecticut in Storrs, the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, and the University of New Hampshire in Durham. It plans to give courses at the University of Vermont in Burlington. For purposes of non-resident tuition remission and preferential admissions status, the School has been designated by the New England Board of Higher Education as the graduate professional program in librarianship serving the region. The School's regional activities, which are currently channeled through the Division of University Extension of the University of Rhode Island, are in accord with the need for improved cooperation in the provision of graduate professional education and for the more wide-spread sharing of educational resources recognized by the Joint Operations Committee of the Land Grant Universities of New England in its "Durham Declaration" of 20 November 1972 and in its more recent report, Cooperative Program Planning for the New England Land Grant Universities.

The establishment of the proposed Bureau depends in large measure on the demonstration of state and regional need for consultation, research, and associated services. It must also be established, as far as is possible in advance of the Bureau's creation, that its activities will result in improved library and information services and perhaps in better cost-benefit ratios. Furthermore, the success of such a Bureau hinges upon close consultation with, and the support of, state library agencies, state departments of education, and state authorities in

control of higher education. It is imperative that the steering committee for the proposed Bureau, as well as its ultimate board of control, contain representatives from each New England state, from the various types of libraries and information agencies, and from the Graduate Library School at the University of Rhode Island. If there is to be a parent organization, such as the New England Interstate Library District or the New England Board of Higher Education, representatives of that body should be involved in the planning and governance of the Bureau. The involvement and support of regional, state, and local library and information service associations should be actively solicited.

Once there is hard evidence of the need for such a Bureau, a major problem will be funding. A portion of the budget should come from the University of Rhode Island as evidence of that institution's interest in, and commitment to, an enterprise situated on its own campus. The development of the Bureau represents an opportunity for Rhode Island to exercise region-wide leadership and service, an opportunity that is often restricted to the larger, more populous state of Massachusetts. Another portion of the budget should come from the New England states, either directly or via an organization such as the New England Interstate Library District or the New England Board of Higher Education. Possible sources of federal support are the research and demonstration provision of Title II-B of the Higher Education Act, the interlibrary cooperation section of Title III of the Library Services and Construction Act, and the design and demonstration parts of the proposed Library Partnership Act. Finally, there is the possibility that a private organization, such as the Council on Library Resources, could be interested in supporting the proposed Bureau, either directly, or through an existing regional body.

Another problem will be the selection and assembly of a staff for the Bureau. It is suggested that the staff for the Bureau consist of interested and qualified

members of the faculty in the Graduate Library School at the University of Rhode Island and of other persons, librarians and non-librarians, academicians and non-academicians, from Rhode Island and New England.

2. That a publicist be engaged to promote, using the media and the best professional techniques, the public, school, academic, and special libraries of Rhode Island.

The Department of State Library Services and individual libraries in Rhode Island have, within their often limited means, done a great deal to promote library service. The statewide publicity and public relations work in which the proposed individual would be involved is viewed as an addition to, rather than a duplication of, existing efforts along these lines.

As the structure of the state's population begins to change, public communication can help libraries cultivate new user groups and encourage more persons to make life-long use of the library. A very high percentage of public, school, and academic library use is accounted for by persons in the 6 to 24 age group. These persons often associate use of the library with formal education and do not continue to make use of library services after they leave school. One purpose of library-to-citizen communication might be to encourage a higher percentage of this group to continue with libraries and to recognize the utility and satisfaction that can be derived from post-school library use. Libraries associated with education face quite another problem, but one which communication can help solve. Low birthrates will, in the near future, begin to re-structure Rhode Island's population. The proportion of persons in the 6 to 24 age group vis-a-vis the rest of the population will begin to decline. If the birthrate continues to be low, there will eventually be fewer persons in that age group than there are now. Because the 6 to 24 age group constitutes the primary clientele for public, school, and academic libraries, communication might help to intensify library use in this group. There is reason to believe, moreover, that educational institutions will become less

pre-occupied with the young as the population structure changes. Schools of all kinds will probably serve a broader spectrum of the population in the future. A professional publicist could help school and academic libraries communicate with those individuals which changes in educational mission have enlisted in formal education. In sum, an effective publicist could help the libraries of the state encourage more life-long library use and assist them in communicating with new audiences resulting from changes in population structure.

The libraries of Rhode Island might employ a publicist directly or contract for such services with a recognized firm. The matter of funding is again very important. In addition to helping libraries communicate with users, a publicist would help convince the taxpayers of the state of the need for increased support of libraries, especially as endowment income of all kinds comes to represent a progressively smaller proportion of public, school, and academic library budgets. It seems entirely possible that the libraries of Rhode Island would be willing to tax themselves to secure the services of an individual whose activities would benefit them all. The mechanism by which such a tax could be apportioned and collected must then be considered. It has been suggested that these activities might involve the Rhode Island Library Association (perhaps in conjunction with the Rhode Island School Library Association) and possibly the Interrelated Library Systems. Alternatives to a system of taxation would be a scheme of institutional dues levied in a just and equitable manner by the Rhode Island Library Association, or an arrangement involving both the levey of institutional dues and some increase in personal dues.

3. <u>That the Rhode Island Library Association cooperate with the Graduate Library School and the Division of University Extension (soon to be called the College of Continuing Education) at the University of Rhode Island in the development of a sound program of continuing library education</u>.

It is important that the content, format, and schedule of the proposed program of continuing education be in accord with the needs of the state's librarians. Members of the Long-Range Planning Committee have expressed an interest in such subjects as management and communication; the non-print media; personnel and organizational evaluation; library cooperation, systems development, and networking; the role of the library in improving reading, listening, and viewing skills; public relations; the conservation of library materials; administrative activities such as participatory decision-making, management by objective, human relations, and organizational analysis; service to the inner city and the elderly; and work with other than white, middle-class library users, particularly ethnic populations and recent, non-English speaking immigrants. Rhode Island librarians must be given a strong voice in what is offered. It is suggested that the Association, the Graduate Library School, and the Division of University Extension survey the librarians of the state to determine what kinds of continuing education are desired. Such a survey might be conducted by direct mail, through the Rhode Island Library Association Bulletin, or at a convention or special meeting of the Association. Those surveyed should be given the opportunity to react to very specific suggestions for courses, seminars, institutes, and workshops, as well as the chance to propose programs which those conducting the survey might have overlooked. In the formulation of such a program, important advisory roles should also be played by the Department of State Library Services and by the State Department of Education.

4. <u>That there be introduced in Rhode Island a state-wide public library borrowers card</u>.

Because Rhode Island is rather like a city-state, library users may live within the bounds of one interrelated library system but work in an area covered by another or by the Providence Public Library, the state's principal public library. Residents of the state may desire direct access to public libraries situated outside the towns,

cities, and regions in which they live. Therefore, a single library card should be accepted at all the public libraries in the state. State-wide borrowing privileges are recommended in the Guidelines for Public Library Service in Rhode Island, adopted in May, 1974, by the Rhode Island Library Association, and they are a 1975 legislative priority of the Association's Government Relations Committee.

The introduction of a universal library card raises certain problems, as the Connecticut experience suggests. There is the issue of credits and debits: direct library service may be better in some parts of the state than in others. The stronger libraries will be more heavily used by outsiders, so the hypothesis goes, than the weaker ones. This would be a less severe problem were the structure of funding for public libraries not what it presently is. Between 75 and 85 percent of public library funding comes from localities, the remainder from state and federal governments. If at least half the funding were state and federal in character, it would be much easier to justify universal access to library resources within and among states. Another problem is implementation. The Committee feels that state-wide borrowing from public libraries on the authority of a single card should be introduced on a state-wide basis and should not await partial implementation at the Interrelated Library System level. Finally, if users are able to secure materials from any public library in the state, they should be able to return such materials at a variety of points in the state. If a user cannot return a book, a periodical, a recording, or some other item to the library from which it was obtained, it should be possible to return the item to one of a select group of libraries or to a materials depository in a shopping mall/center, a bank, or a community center of some kind.

If a state-wide public library borrowers card is to work, the Department of State Library Services must approve it and assist with the mechanics and necessary financial arrangements. Indeed, the Department and the Rhode Island Library

Association might consider forming a joint committee for the investigation and implementation of this idea. Such a committee might make a thorough study of the Connecticut experience one of its first orders of business.

5. That the Rhode Island Library Association provide a forum within which the advantages and disadvantages of the unionization of library employees, professional and non-professional alike, can be thoroughly discussed.

Collective bargaining by professionals and public employees is well established in several states and a matter of considerable interest to professional librarians and other library employees. A law passed in Massachusetts during the summer of 1974 suggests how complicated the issue can be. Professional librarians in that state may now (a) bargain on their own; (b) join with non-professional library employees; (c) join a union composed of all of the professionals employed by a public authority; or (d) unite with all the other employees, professional and non-professional, of a public agency or governmental unit. Persons engaged in library work of all kinds are increasingly concerned with the appointment of library personnel, promotion, tenure, salaries, employee evaluation, and discrimination, issues which are very often at the core of contracts between unions and managements. In recent years, a number of professional associations have become quasi-unions. The National Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers, and the American Association of University Professors all represent librarians who are connected with educational institutions. Municipal and other public employee unions enroll a considerable number of librarians and non-professional personnel associated with public libraries. Some special librarians are associated with white-collar unions which operate in their firms and other places of employment. There are those who think that unions are the appropriate vehicle within which librarians can further their occupational and economic interests. Others are opposed to unionization in

librarianship. Both sides should be heard and the matter of unionization explored in considerable depth. An excellent place for such debate and exploration would be an ongoing forum or seminar under the auspices of the Rhode Island Library Association with cooperation from other library and non-library groups within the state.

6. That there be established in Rhode Island a comprehensive system by which the bibliographic data made available to the New England Library Information Network from the Library of Congress via the Ohio College Library Center can be rapidly disseminated to any interested public, school, academic, or special library in the state.

Such a system could ultimately bind together the libraries of Rhode Island in such important resource-sharing activities as coordinated acquisitions, shared cataloging, circulation control, and inter-library loan. The development of such an arrangement would permit Rhode Island to operate as an effective node in any national bibliographic and information network promoted by the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science. The state should be prepared in this way for active participation in what the Executive Committee of the New England Library Information Network calls "the emerging community of library networks."

The Department of State Library Services and a number of libraries in the state are already members of the New England Library Information Network. Excellent progress has already been made toward the kind of state-wide system proposed in this recommendation. Economies accrue from membership in such a system, and it need not be argued that contemporary libraries are under some pressure to be more efficient and economical in their operation. Paradoxically, however, those smaller public, school, academic, and special libraries which might gain a great deal economically from belonging to such an arrangement do not always have the financial

resources to participate in something like the on-line shared cataloging system established by the Ohio College Library Center and its affiliated networks.

The Rhode Island Library Association should work actively with the Department of State Library Services and other organizations and libraries in the state to insure the broad dissemination of MARC II bibliographic data and access for the state's libraries to other resource-sharing services offered by a developed bibliographic network.

7. That the Rhode Island Library Association actively promote the appointment of a School Library Specialist in the State Department of Education.

The appointment of a Specialist is important to the continued development and well being of the school libraries and librarians of Rhode Island. Moreover, the Association should encourage the development of certification standards for school media center personnel and the establishment of better working conditions for school librarians, including the status of department head where departmentalization exists and more equitable union contracts which would allow all elementary school librarians the "free" hour now permitted classroom teachers.

Finally, the Association might urge the State Department of Education to include in teacher certification requirements some introduction to the school library and its important role in the teaching and learning process.